

The 914th Airlift Wing

NIAGARA

FRONTIERSMAN



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NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION

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NIAGARA SALUTES HOMETOWN HEROES



Commanders Column

By Col. James B. Roberts
Commander, 914 AW

Hello Niagara! Everything Dixie and I heard about Niagara Falls ARS is true! Outstanding people, great mission, dedicated and committed warriors, tremendous community support. This is an extremely busy time for the 914AW, as we have been called to do our part in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the War on Terrorism. The base support has been phenomenal and I want to thank all of you for the vital role you play. The team you have built here, to include the 107ARW, all service branches of the guard and reserve, civilians, and contractors is exceptional. As we look ahead, our major agenda is set for the remainder of this year. We have our aviation packages deployed and are just starting up an aggressive AEF rotation schedule. We want to give our best efforts to support our folks and get them back quickly, continue to train and be prepared for future tasks. We are also looking into the "books" as we prepare for a Unit Compliance Inspection next year. For those of you who have not been through one of these, it is a very detailed look at our procedures and the paperwork trail that is generated by them. If you don't have the documentation, then you don't have a program. Two key components to ensuring we are in compliance are the Self-Inspection Program and

the Management Control Program. Most of the squadrons appear to be well ahead in these areas, but we will dig down to ensure the HQ knows how good we really are in accomplishing the mission.

I want to take this opportunity to put my safety hat back on for a moment. During times of high tempo operations we tend to get stressed out and tired. Both of these can lead to mishaps. Watch out for each other, make risk analysis a part of how you do your job. When the risks outweigh the objective, let's consider other ways of getting it done. There are times when our jobs require that risks be taken. That is when we need our safety conscience to be sure every aspect has been thought out completely so that we can be successful.

Thanks again for the warm welcome and all that you are doing. Most especially for the attitude and heart that I have sensed. Dixie and I are excited to be here at Niagara and join with you in defending this great nation.



NIAGARA FRONTIERSMAN

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Wing Commander
 Col. James B. Roberts

Base Public Affairs Officer
 Mr. Neil E. Nolf

Wing Public Affairs Officer
 Maj. James H. Nagelhout

Editor
 TSgt. Kevin L. Nichols

Public Affairs Staff
 Maj. Joanne M. Cook
 MSgt. Peter J. Borys
 MSgt. Joseph Cyran
 TSgt. David L. Allen
 SSgt. James R. Orbin Jr.
 SSgt. Jeffrey P. Fitch
 Ms. Mariah E. Church

Photographers
 TSgt. Christopher K. Boswell
 TSgt. Roland T. Gray

On the cover:

The Niagara community in conjunction with the Military Affairs Council hosted a parade on Military Road recognizing all of the troops from the local area who have served in operations at home and overseas. Several hundred 914th unit members marched in the parade to "Salute Hometown Heroes" for the first time since Operation Desert Storm in 1991. This was the first public appearance of Col. James Roberts and his wife Dixie on the Niagara Frontier. (Photos by TSgt. Chris Boswell)

Birthday Message

*By Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche
 and Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. John P. Jumper*

In 56 years, the U.S. Air Force has earned its wings as the world's greatest air and space force. Our airmen and our technology are the best our nation have to offer, an achievement that flows from the contributions of every airman — whether active, guard, reserve, civilian or retired.

On Sept. 18, the anniversary of our creation, remember that through your integrity, selfless service and incomparable excellence, Americans find strength and confidence in the Air Force's ability to answer our nation's call, no matter when or where we're needed.

We celebrate the Air Force's birthday as we continue to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Your tireless commitment, agility and professionalism are the foundation for integrating air and space power into a successful joint and coalition combat operation — one that has already crushed a tyrannical regime and is now helping to blaze the trail of freedom for millions in Iraq.

Yet, as we celebrate, we recognize that this success is not without costs. We appreciate you and your families' extraordinary sacrifices. Let's take this special occasion to remember the airmen who made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the security of America and the opportunity of freedom for those who have never before tasted liberty.

The Air Force's legacy has soared in its short history and greater opportunities are on the horizon - opportunities you'll meet with the same courage, commitment and confidence that define our first 56 years. America is proud of our Air Force, and Americans are proud of you. Happy Birthday!

914 AW members go back to Iraq

By MSgt. Peter Borys
914th Public Affairs

Over 150 members and four aircraft have left the lush green grass and blue cascading water of Niagara Falls to the dusty green dry desert of the Middle East. It's the second time for the wing which deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in March during the initial phase of the war.

Reservists again answered the call to duty at the end of August. It is a difficult task, but one that every reservist was willing to do. TSgt. Don Miller, a loadmaster had to put his construction business on hold due to the extended deployment. Maj. Chuck Giarrizzo, a navigator on the C-130 who is a sales engineer, made this his third trip to Southwest Asia.

"We had no idea we were going back," said Giarrizzo. "We thought, if anything, we would be deployed for European operations or here for homeland security." When the orders came in, it was difficult for his spouse to hear. His wife Laree, couldn't believe it at first. "If you look on the bright side, he was home for the summer. I'm a teacher so we were able to spend a lot of quality time together." She, like many spouses is keeping busy with family and friends.

SMSgt. Dave Tarnowski, a flight engineer who has been with the unit since 1976, returns for a third time to the AOR. His son Michael, also a reservist with the 914th who remains behind said he is overwhelmingly proud of his dad. While some fathers flew out on the deployment, others watched their sons depart.

SMSgt. Chris Pfeil Sr. and his son 1Lt Chris Pfeil Jr, served together during the last mission. "We went over there, and we came home together, said Pfeil Jr. This time he doesn't have the comfort of having a family member with him.

The unit is very busy flying resupply missions to all the different areas in the theater, said Lt Col. Jim Difrancesco acting Director of Operations. Not only are they busy flying resupply missions, but also a few VIP's like; Secretary of State Colin Powell, and entertainers Wayne Newton, and Drew Carey.

Squadron Commander LtCol Mark Murphy said, "the unit here is highly motivated. Anything we encounter we're able to take care of based on our training.

Wing Commander Col. James Roberts said, "The 914th is really the 'go to' unit right now. We have the best equipment and the best-trained people. This is exactly what we're capable of accomplishing." It's an unprecedented third rotation to the Middle East for the unit, but the mood among the members is professional and confident.

It is not known when the unit will come home, but remains activated until March 2004.



Pictured above: U.S. servicemembers at Tabuk Air Base, Saudi Arabia, use morale tent computers to e-mail family and friends back home. People waited up to three hours for a chance to send e-mails. (Courtesy Photo)



Master Sgt. William Conta, deployed 914th Airlift Wing work group manager at Tabuk Air Base, Saudi Arabia. (Courtesy Photo)

Reservists put deployed members in touch with home

By Capt. Anita Pavey
Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. — Trading New York's spring chill for sweltering Southwest Asia heat wasn't a shock to reservists from the 914th Airlift Wing, even though they had left the frigid Northeast only a few days before. The shock of Operation Iraqi Freedom came when they arrived at their deployed location and learned there was a ban on morale calls, no e-mail capability for the general base populace and no standard mail service.

Arriving at a "bare bones" base, the deployed members from Niagara Falls International Airport Air Reserve Station, N.Y., knew they needed to put some awe back into their mission because the base population would soon swell to 4,000. The reservists got together with members from other Air Force Reserve Command, Air National Guard and active-duty units to come up with a plan.

"I coordinated with civil engineering, services and maintenance to construct a morale tent for the purposes of official and morale e-mail and Internet accessibility," said Master Sgt. William Conta, deployed work group manager. He also enlisted the aid of Master Sgt. William Caldwell, organizational computer manager.

"As soon as Col. Walter Gordon (328th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron commander) signed the memo designating me as the computer control officer and deployed work group manager, the process was under way," Conta said.

Conta and a team of volunteers went to work. From his deployment experience, he knew Internet capability would be a must to keep morale up.

In less than a day, Niagara maintainers built a tent capable of protecting computers from the daily assault of swirling sand.

Once word got around that the tent would be for morale, volunteers appeared from nowhere to help. After running cable to the tent, Conta and Caldwell went from tent to tent asking for computers from people who brought them to the desert. They ended up with 10 computers. They set them up, ran cable, configured the network switch, got volunteers to man the tent and brought 24-hour e-mail access to more than 3,700 people.

"One man told me I saved his marriage," Conta said.

"I believe (Conta) found himself in his environment when we arrived in Tabuk," said Chief Master Sgt. Keith Coffey, 914th AW maintenance superintendent. "What a great idea it was."

The morale tent was so popular that lines were sometimes two to three hours long. Eventually, 20-25 computers were up and running, bringing about 750 people through the tent every day with 22,000 log-ons in one month.

"I would rise at 2 a.m., make my way over to the tent, and my three daughters and wife would fire messages back and forth almost like instant messaging," Coffey said.

The morale tent proved itself in other ways, too. Staff members went to work helping install and repair computer systems for maintenance, services, administration and the C-130 flying mission.

"This kind of response speaks volumes to the integrated total force," Conta said. "The volunteers and staff simply did what needed to be done. All of us in theater worked hard, in whatever capacity we could, to obtain mission objectives."

The operation was so successful it had to be moved to a larger location — the California tent. "The morale tent was a fine example of taking care of your troops," said Lt. Gen. T. Michael Mosely, commander of U.S. Central Command Air Forces.

For Caldwell, it was an opportunity to see people at their best.

"My work in the morale tent was among the most rewarding tasks of my career," he said. (AFRC News Service)



914th Comm Squadron has recently deployed to the AOR settling into a forward operating location in Kuwait where they will provide communication support.



A 914th crew provided airlift for Secretary of State Colin Powell during his visit to Iraq.

Col. Wade Farris gets a taste of Niagara's mist for his last flight. The former 914th commander has assumed command of the 439 AW ARB Mass. (Photo by Ms. Kim Ronan)



AF Climate Survey launches Oct. 1

By Richard Salomon

Air Force Manpower and Innovation Agency Public Affairs

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — Air Force leaders at all levels want to know, "How is my organization doing?" The 2003 Air Force Climate Survey begins Oct. 1 to answer this question with the help of Air Force people.

Their participation in the survey is critical, said senior leaders.

"Leadership must be made aware of what's really going on out there," said Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche. "By taking a few brief moments to fill out this survey, you can help your leaders understand your concerns and ultimately better serve you and our nation's interests."

Previous surveys included active-duty airmen and appropriated-fund civilians. This year, the survey also will include the Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, non-appropriated fund civilians and students in a temporary-duty status.

"We want to make sure all members of the Air Force team have an opportunity to participate," said Lori Marcum, the survey's team leader. "Leaders at all levels use the Air Force Climate Survey to target areas for improvement. In order to create positive changes within an organization, (leaders) must know where to begin. This survey provides everyone an opportunity to speak out about strengths and areas for improvement in their organization."

The survey runs through Nov. 23 and can be completed online at <http://afclimatesurvey.af.mil> anytime during the survey period from either a government computer (dot-mil) or personal computer (dot-com).

Because Air Force leaders expect candid feedback, the survey team has taken extraordinary measures to ensure privacy by using advanced information-masking software. Anonymity continues to be a key factor of the survey, officials said.

Results will be released early in 2004, said Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff.

"The U.S. Air Force is the finest in the world, a great place to serve and raise our families. We share a commitment to make it better," he said.

Survey participation has climbed from 39 percent in 1997 and 36 percent in 1999 to more than 65 percent of active-duty airmen and civilians in the 2002 survey.

Air Force unveils plan to wear test new utility uniform

By Tech. Sgt. David A. Jablonski
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — Air Force officials announced plans Aug. 6 for the wear test of a new utility uniform that could replace the current battle dress uniform.

The blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage ensemble is a departure from the current woodland-pattern uniform and includes many new features that are intended to increase functionality and provide a distinctive look for airmen of the 21st century, officials said.

Three hundred uniforms will undergo wear testing from January to July at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska; Hurlburt Field, Fla.; Langley AFB, Va.; Luke AFB, Ariz.; McChord AFB, Wash.; Ramstein Air Base, Germany; Robins AFB, Ga.; Vandenberg AFB, Calif.; and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The test will generate feedback about fit, durability and functionality.

“Our intent is to create a uniform that will be distinctive, practical, easy to maintain, comfortable and, most important, a uniform you will be proud to wear,” said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

“We have become a more expeditionary force, with less time at home to spend caring for the uniform,” Jumper said. “In the last 20 years, material technology has improved greatly. As a result, we have designed one uniform that can satisfy our various climates and utility needs, while eliminating the need for professional ironing to provide a polished appearance.”

Jumper said the distinctive Air Force uniform is designed to fit well, look sharp and require much less maintenance than the current uniform.

“We (also) need to ensure our airmen have a uniform that fulfills our unique air and space missions,” he added.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald R. Murray said great care is being taken to ensure the best possible uniform is created to meet future needs.

“I believe that one of the great strengths of our Air Force and its airmen is the ability to adapt to new missions, new technologies and an ever-changing world landscape,” he said. “This new utility uniform is another example of seeing a need for improvement and moving forward.”

A key step in bringing any new uniform item into service is feedback from airmen in the field, Murray said.

“I believe it’s a uniform fitting of the world’s greatest expeditionary Air Force and one that we will be proud to wear,” he said. “We want your feedback as well — not shoot-from-the-hip feedback, but feedback that comes from seeing the uniform in action and thinking about how it will meet your needs based on your work environment.

“It’s important to remember that this is a wear test, and the decision about whether or not to adopt some, all or none of this uniform will be made after considering the results of the test and feedback about how it meets airmen’s needs,” Murray said.

According to officials, the wash and wear uniform will be easier to maintain and will not require professional laundering or starching. Officials estimate that home laundering can save up to \$240 in laundry costs over the course of a year.

Unlike the current BDU, the new version comes in men’s and women’s cuts. The separate women’s uniform reflects the growth in the number of women in the service. In the late 1980s women comprised less than 13 percent of the total force; today nearly one in five airmen are women.

Officials said other possible advantages to the uniform include:

— Using the same fabric identified by the Marines as the optimum material for wash and wear characteristics;

— A camouflage pattern that corresponds to the jobs airmen do in most situations that require a utility uniform,

— Recalling the “tiger stripe” camouflage pattern used during the Vietnam War, but with the distinctive Air Force logo embedded into a color scheme that preliminary testing indicates may provide better camouflage.

Officials are also considering maintenance-free boots and alternative T-shirts.

The uniform patterns are being cut, with production to begin in November. Data collection and analysis, and any potential adjustments, will occur from August through October 2004. A final decision on the uniform is expected in December 2004. If approved, production could begin as soon as 2005, with a phase-in date to be determined.

ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, Md. (AFPN) — Second Lt. Arcelia Miller of the Air Force’s special security office puts the Air Force test utility uniform through its paces at an entry control point here. The blue, gray and green tiger-stripe camouflage ensemble includes many new features intended to increase functionality while providing a distinctive look for the 21st century airmen. The uniforms will undergo wear-testing beginning in January. Airmen from a cross section of Air Force career fields will provide feedback on the fit, durability and functionality of the proposed ensemble that will come in men’s and women’s cuts. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi)



Pieces of our hearts

By Cindy Jones
914 AW Federal Women’s Program Manager

When the Federal Women’s Program heard that our troops would be activated and deployed, we decided to make a quilt that would honor the men and women of the 914th.

We contacted Debbie Fouts, an expert quilter and past president of the Tonawanda quilter’s guild to instruct us. We gave her some ideas about what we wanted in the quilt and she came up with the design. Her expertise and patience enabled us to complete the quilt top in only four evenings.

On Tuesday evenings Debbie Mellon, Kathy Ballester, Phyllis Snow, Annette Gruber, and Cindy Jones would pack up our sewing machines, rotary cutters, and irons and meet at Family Readiness to assemble the quilt. The quilt is now in the process of being quilted, but is almost complete. It will be raffled off in December, with proceeds going back to the Federal Women’s Program, which in turn funds many events for the base.

Each design in the quilt has a specific meaning. The Blue Star Service Banner in the middle represents the men and women who were deployed. The Flags represent service to our country. The Log Cabin pattern represents home and family, with the Friendship Star in the corners. We discovered later that since WWI, gold stars were put over blue stars when a loved one lost their life in service. This gave new meaning to our quilt. Even though none of our troops were harmed while deployed, it now gave honor to former members of the 914th who have passed.

The quilt is truly a representation of the 914th. Each piece alone is just a piece of fabric. But when all the pieces are put together, it becomes a beautiful quilt. In the same way, Reservists, Arts, and Civilians, are just individuals doing our jobs. But together, we have become one of the best teams in the Air Force Reserve.

Tickets can be purchased for \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00 from Cindy Jones, ext. 2541 or Sue Bowman, ext. 6355. Our goal is to raise \$914.00.

Local MIA returns home

By TSgt. David Allen
914th Public Affairs

It took 36 years, but Cheri Hammer finally gave her father a proper goodbye. Last month, Lieutenant Commander Thomas W. Sitek, a Navy pilot who perished when his plane was shot down over Vietnam in 1967, was brought home and laid to rest next to his parents in Riverdale Cemetery in Lewiston. Hammer, his oldest child, is the wife of 914th Vice Support Group Commander Kurt Hammer.

"We considered burying him in Arlington," she said. "But he belongs home."

Sitek's return home capped almost 20 years of work by the US government. The government began searching for him in 1986, when the Vietnamese government returned the remains of his copilot, found years before.

Sitek, a native of Niagara Falls, joined the Navy in 1955, after earning a two-year degree in architecture from Erie County Technical College. Following his dream of flying, he became a pilot and earned a spot flying jets.

In 1967, as the Vietnam War was heating up, Sitek was a squadron leader for a group of fighter jets on the aircraft carrier USS Constellation. The ship was stationed at Miriman Naval Base in San Diego, but made frequent missions to Vietnam.

At the time of his last mission, Sitek was within two weeks of leaving the service. After 12 years of service, he had decided to finish out his tour of duty and bring his family home to Niagara Falls, where he had already lined up a position to fly for TWA.

Even though he was not required to fly any more, on August 23 he volunteered to fly one last mission with his crew, which was assigned to bomb a stretch of railroad tracks near Hanoi.

"It was his last mission, he didn't have to do it. He was due to get out, and had a job waiting for him," said Cheri Hammer. "But they were his men, and it was supposed to be a low-risk mission."

As they approached the target, Sitek's plane was hit by two surface-to-air missiles and went down over Ha Bac (now Hanh Phuc Village), east of Hanoi. Other crews in the formation saw the plane go down, but because the plane went down in hostile territory, a rescue mission was impossible. Sitek and his intercept officer, Ensign Patrick L. Ness were listed as missing in action, and later killed in action. His wife, Patricia, and their three children returned to Western New York.

Cheri, who was eight years old at the time her father was lost, maintained a need to know exactly what happened. And in 1992, she received unexpected news, a report from a government task force that had visited Vietnam to search for her father's crash site.

Over the next decade, the U.S. returned to Vietnam to continue their search, excavating possible sites and interviewing witnesses. Cheri Hammer kept in constant contact with task force representatives, eager for new information and to make sure her father remained a top priority.

"The more information I got, the more I wanted," she said.

In 1999, searchers found remains they believed were Sitek's, along with several life support and personal items, including a Saint Christopher Medallion that Sitek routinely wore. The remains were brought to Hawaii while the investigation of the crash site continued. In 2002, the government officially declared the remains to be Sitek's.

"Whatever their vision was, they didn't want to give up," Cheri Hammer said about the search team's efforts.

Unlike others who lost family members during the war, the Hammers have no interest in visiting Vietnam to see the crash site. For the family, the story ended with his return home.

"It's over, she said.



Cheri Hammer proudly displays a photograph of her father Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Sitek.

What's New in Services?

By Mr. Jerry Slipko
914th Services Marketing Director

As of 1 Oct 03, the Flightline Diner that is located in the Recreation Center will be under new management. Ms. Donna Moseman, the Falcon Club manager will become the new manager of the Flightline Diner. Donna has said that she is looking forward to this new challenge in managing both the Flightline Diner and the Falcon Club. She is committed to make some improvements and changes at the Flightline Diner, but what will not change is the good customer service from Bev, Denise, and CeCe. One change has already been made with the installation of a new pizza oven.

In a few weeks, we are planning on sending out a survey to all of our customers to obtain some feedback in regards to the Flightline Diner. Basically, we want to know what we are doing right to serve you as well as what we can improve to serve you better. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email them to Donna.Moseman@niagarafalls.af.mil or Jerry.Slipko@niagarafalls.af.mil.

Even though the summer season is over, the Services IT&T office still has

discount tickets available for new local attractions. With winter just around the corner, you may want to keep your car clean and protect it from the nasty road salt. Well, you can do this by purchasing discount Delta Sonic car wash tickets through IT&T. We sell a wide variety of different types of washes as well as detailing packages and oil changes. If we do not have the package you want, we can order it for you. Car wash tickets make a great birthday or Christmas gift.

Along with the Delta Sonic discounts, you can purchase all of your Kissing Bridge skiing discount tickets through Services IT&T. We sell all types of skiing packages and season passes. There are too many to list! For more information on these promotions as well as other local attractions, please contact the IT&T office at 236-3367.

If you have children and are on any of the following statuses: UTA, AT, or RUTA, you are eligible for free childcare through Services. This program is offered through the following childcare providers and they are Colleen Klimecko (285-7259) or Lavina Harris (743-9451). The POC is SMSGT Bob Leiser from the 107th.

If you have not received the latest edition of the Services STAR, please stop by one of the Services facilities to pick up a copy today.

Quiet Professionals

By TSgt. Kevin Nichols
914th Public Affairs



Patrolmen Richard Mann, Nelson Cirrito, and Security Forces Controller Gerald Bergman along with their fellow DOD police stand watch at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.

Since the events of 9/11 much has been said about the efforts of the military side of the armed services. While this is certainly true there is also another group of dedicated individuals who have gone quietly about their jobs with little fanfare. The Department of Defense Police, part of the 914th Security Forces Squadron here at Niagara, have been an integral part of Operation Noble Eagle.

As Patrolman Richard Mann stated, "We are homeland security."

These quiet professionals have been working 12+ hour shifts from the beginning, alongside their military counterparts from the Army and Air Force here at the base. "We're all putting it on the line whether blue or green" said Mann.

"Despite procedural and philosophical differences among different security forces units, we still work as one group to provide necessary security" stated Security Forces Controller Gerry Bergman. With the many changes here at Niagara "DOD is the one constant" said Bergman.

Every DOD policeman assigned to Niagara is a veteran of the armed services and brings to the job a wealth of knowledge and experience.

With that experience the "future looks bright for Niagara as the base holds alot of opportunities to homeland defense" stated Security Forces Controller John Tucker.

In these trying times we are all "working towards one goal and that is the safety and security of the base and this country" said Tucker.

Did You Know?

Rings: AFI 36-2903, table 2.6, item 5, page 95, states that a maximum of three rings may be worn at any one time. The OPR for the AFI clarifies that an engagement ring and wedding band count as one ring, regardless if they're soldered together or not.

Eyeglasses and sunglasses: AFI 36-2903 table 2.6, item 8, page 95 and AFPAM 36-2241, para 9.6.2. state that eyeglasses and sunglasses will be free of ornamentation on frames and lenses (for example, name brand). They will have conservative, clear, slightly tinted, or photosensitive lenses indoors or in formation. Conservative lenses and frames outdoors (faddish styles and mirrored lenses are **PROHIBITED**). **NO** sunglasses are permitted while in formation. Glasses will not be worn around neck, (i.e. with Croakies).

(OPR - MPF Customer Service - x2197)



Photo By: MSgt. Peter Borys

The honorable Thomas Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, visited Niagara after speaking before the Western NY ESGR Committee Annual Breakfast with the Boss event.

Photos of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" are available to view on the "W" drive, under Photos & Graphics folder. Click onto Photos folder. Next click Operation Iraqi Freedom Folder. This drive is constantly being updated with new photos. There is also a PowerPoint 2002 Presentation with music in the Presentation folder under the Operation Iraqi Freedom Folder for your viewing & listening pleasure. If you have any other photos of OIF, Public Affairs would like to submit them to the "W" drive. Contact Ext. 2136.

COOKIES CAREER CORNER

There is a movement in the U.S. Senate to make Separation Allowance and Imminent Danger Pay permanent. The chief architect of the increases in danger pay and family separation allowance approved by Congress earlier this year -and due to expire on Sept 30 - said the administration is wrong to oppose making the current pay rates permanent.

Senator Richard Durbin, D-Ill, whose efforts in April let to a \$150 increase in monthly family separation allowance and a \$75 dollar increase in monthly imminent danger pay, introduced a bill Monday Sep 15 along with Senate Democratic leader, Sen. Tom Daschle of South Dakota, to make the increases part of a permanent law. The special pays had been included in the 2003 supplemental appropriations bill, a temporary funding measure, and the rates will revert on Oct 1 to the old monthly payments unless a new law is enacted.

Currently only those deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan receive this extra pay.

"It is unfair to cut funding intended to help military families that are bearing the costs of far-flung U.S. deployments," Durbin said. "It is unacceptable that imminent danger pay would be less in one combat zone than in another."

The bill introduced by Durbin and Daschle, S-1615, faces an uncertain fate. One idea is to try to attach the bill to the new Iraq reconstruction budget the White House is expected to send to Congress.

Don't forget to update your personal data on the VMPF web site. There is much more to this web site than just updating your VRED, Virtual Record of Emergency Data. You can check your awards and decorations, phone numbers, address, you can also check many other areas of your military record. This will be a very important website and will be relied upon much more in the future to accomplish many personnel actions.

AFSA Chapter 177 Officer Elections

Elections will be held on Saturday of the October UTA for officers of Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 177.

Nominations for President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Sgt. at Arms will be accepted until that meeting.

Final nominations and Elections will take place in the recreation center at 1300 Saturday, October 17.

Please submit nominations to MSgt. Dennis Gauda 914 flightline, ext. 2251 or CMSgt. John Mondoux 914 ASTS, ext 2581.



Tops In Blue entertained the Niagara community at Artpark for the first time ever. This traditional event showcases the best talent in the Air Force to foster community relations as well as provide a great evening of entertainment for the troops and their families.

Niagara Frontiersman



Photo By: TSgt. Kevin Nichols

The Niagara Frontiersman is printed for unit members like Col. Walter Gordon and Lt. Col. Mark Murphy. Lt. Col. Murphy assumed command in August of the 328th Airlift Squadron replacing Colonel Gordon who commanded the unit during the initial deployment to the AOR in March 2003.

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Headquarters Bldg. 800 Kirkbridge Drive
Niagara Falls ARS, NY 14304-5001



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"When good people in any country cease their vigilance and struggle, then evil men prevail."

- Pearl S. Buck